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Part One: A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

Summary: In this part of the book it begins by introducing us to the main character Mariam. Mariam’s story involves her mother, Nana, and her father Jalil. However, Mariam and Nana live far outside of the city because Mariam was conceived out of wedlock therefore she is a shameful child. Jalil visits Mariam every Thursday to tell her of the world outside her small hut. The novel depicts Mariam’s adoring love for her father and the resent for her mother; Jalil is nice to her when she visits however her mother constantly calls her names. One day Mariam runs away to the city for Jalil never showed up to take her to the movie theater. She sleeps outside Jalil’s house like a dog to wake up the next morning and be escorted home by Jalil’s personal driver. However, Mariam saw Jalil in a window, she knew that he lied, she saw the true colors of her father, and she came to the conclusion that her mother told her about for years. Mariam brought shame to her father, for he did not truly love her. Mariam cries on her journey home, back to the hut where her mother and her live alone. Returning home, Mariam has found that Nana committed suicide. Mariam has no choice but to live with Jalil and his wives, bringing even more shame to their family. Therefore, the women find Mariam a husband, and older man who lives cites away. Mariam is sent away, bitter and angry that Jalil let this happen to her. Her husband, Rasheed, treats Mariam well; he is patient with her and gives her a room to sleep. However, as the years pass by the reader sees that Mariam cannot carry a child (seven miscarriages). Rasheed no longer finds any pleasure from her; her cooking, cleaning, and very existence makes him angry so he hits her. Mariam lives in constant fear now. At the end of this section the reader hears of the beginning of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Analysis: This part of the book fills me with sorrow. Mariam’s life appears unwanted from the very beginning. No one should feel that they bring shame to the family for simply being born. Furthermore, her father Jalil is a complete jerk. He led her on for years saying how he loved her and filled her mind with knowledge of a world she would never know. I was glad when the women married her off to a man who lived cities away just for the fact it would get her away from Jalil and give her a fresh start where she would not feel worthless. Unfortunately, all men seem to feel they are God’s greatest gift to this earth. Rasheed was a nice man at first but as the reader I could see through his fake front. He became controlling by telling her what he expected and forcing her to wear a head garment. For some reason Mariam was flattered by this, but, because we come from different backgrounds, I knew that they are red flags for a bad relationship. I am honestly confused by what is going on in Afghanistan at this part in the story but by reading the summary I know that it has something to do with the Soviets.

Application: The psychological aspect of human nature is that men feel they are superior. In most of these classics, yes, men were superior over women but how they show it is what disgusts me. The fact that most men in these stories beat, use, and underappreciated the women they are with can still be seen in society today. Additionally, the family roles are still assumed today; the man goes to work to make money and the woman stays home to cook, clean, shop, and bear children for the man. Society today has tried to push this mind set away but honestly, this is engraved into our minds. Women today do make money and hold jobs however, there are many who take the role of stay at home mothers.